

## Ethikos Volume 37, Number 3. July 01, 2023 Pioneers in business ethics: Patrick Gnazzo

---

by Patrick Gnazzo and Joan E. Dubinsky, JD

**Patrick Gnazzo** ([patrick.gnazzo@gmail.com](mailto:patrick.gnazzo@gmail.com), [linkedin.com/in/patrick-j-gnazzo-a04b4412/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/patrick-j-gnazzo-a04b4412/)) is Principal at Better Business Practices LLC, in McLean, VA, USA.

**Joan E. Dubinsky** is Senior Lecturer, School of Public Policy, University of Maryland Fellow, Rutland Institute for Ethics, at Clemson University. Dubinsky is the former Chief Ethics Officer at the United Nations.

Questions for this interview were also provided by Gretchen Winter and Patricia H. Werhane. Gretchen Winter ([gwinter@illinois.edu](mailto:gwinter@illinois.edu), [linkedin.com/in/gretchen-winter-47a81311/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/gretchen-winter-47a81311/)) is Clinical Assistant Professor of Business Administration in the Gies College of Business and adjunct professor in the College of Law and the Grainger College of Engineering City Scholars Program at the University of Illinois Urbana–Champaign; she is also an invited professor at CY Cergy Paris School of Law.

Patricia H. Werhane is a Faculty Fellow at the Center for Professional Responsibility in Business and Society at the Gies College of Business, University of Illinois Urbana–Champaign, and Professor Emerita at the University of Virginia.

A note on this series: In the last 40 years or so, an entirely new academic and occupational niche for practicing ethics in business has emerged. Many of the original academic business ethicists came to the field through philosophy, then brought their thinking and research into business schools. Many of the original practitioners came to the field through the law and remain close to the practice of law.

In an effort to preserve and share this knowledge and practical experience, the Center for Professional Responsibility in Business and Society at the University of Illinois Gies College of Business has filmed and transcribed the oral histories of these pioneers and early adopters. To date, almost 50 academics and practitioners have been interviewed, each with 25 years or more of experience in the field of business ethics.

This series aims to provide a better understanding of how the business ethics field and profession have evolved over the decades through the interviewees' own experiences. This interview was condensed for clarity and brevity. This interview is loosely based on the Business Ethics Pioneer interview that took place earlier, and updates have been made. For more details on this series, contact Winter.

**JED: Tell us how you became involved in ethics and compliance.**

**PG:** Like so many other business ethics pioneers, I did not get a chance to volunteer to be United Technologies' (UTC) first compliance officer: I was anointed.

In the mid-1980s, I was the associate general counsel for UTC, responsible for government contract compliance which included how UTC did business with the federal government. At that time, the United States government was concerned about fraud, waste, and abuse in its extensive contracting relationships. UTC'S CEO came to my office to describe a conversation that he had with the late Jack Welch, then the CEO of General Electric. Our CEO said, "We ought to do something to convince the Department of Defense that UTC was not a cheat." Since I was associated with government contracting, I was drafted.

---

**JED: Why was it so important to help rehabilitate the reputations of major defense contractors?**

**PG:** I joined UTC after 10 years as the chief trial attorney for the U.S. Navy. My mother was so proud that her son worked for the U.S. government. After reading news stories about fraud, waste, and abuse by government contractors, my mother called one day and asked, “Are you a crook?” This hit me hard—we were “guilty by association.” Unless we could explain what we were doing and why, that kind of reputation would always precede every government contractor. I wanted to make sure that we in UTC could change that reputation so that my mother and my kids would be proud that I worked for a defense contractor that could make their lives better.

This document is only available to subscribers. Please log in or purchase access.

[Purchase Login](#)